

Philco's "FM" Let the Buyer Beware

CONSUMERS Union's attention has been called to the fact that some radio manufacturers, and notably PHILCO, are releasing "FM radios" which are imitations of the real thing.

To begin with, the two outstanding features of FM from a user's viewpoint are absence of static and better tone. PHILCO's FM radio is so constructed that it is not staticless under normal conditions of use. It will, however, bring in FM stations, and the static heard on it will be small in comparison with that heard on the regular broadcast band.

CU has compared a PHILCO FM set with a standard (Armstrong system) FM radio, and has found that if the static is bad enough the PHILCO lets it through while the standard FM set does not.

In addition, the type of radio built by

PHILCO cannot be expected in normal use to separate two interfering stations operating on the same spot (frequency)—and there will be such stations as the popularity of FM grows—while a radio built on the basic Armstrong principle will bring in only one of two interfering stations.

On the basis of its examination and test of the PHILCO set, CU warns consumers not to buy the PHILCO if they want the best FM reception. Despite its limitations, however, PHILCO FM does give better reception than conventional broadcast band sets, and therefore might be a good buy as a sort of in-between model if its price were considerably lower. But it sells in the same price range as full-fledged FM sets.

Ratings of FM radios are scheduled to appear in the November REPORTS.